

FACT SHEET

Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children: Supplemental Services



INTRODUCTION

According to the U.S. Census 2000, more than six million children across the country are living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives¹. The Census further found that nearly 5.8 million grandparents are living in households with one or more of their own grandchildren under the age of 18. More than 2.4 million of these grandparents are primarily responsible for meeting the basic needs of these children². Factors such as parental substance abuse, incarceration, HIV/AIDS, death, and poverty are causing growing numbers of grandparents and other relatives to step forward and keep families together.

The National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP), a new program administered by the Administration on Aging (AoA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, offers five categories of support services for grandparents and other relatives aged 60 and older who are relative caregivers of children, and family caregivers of individuals aged 60 and older. For more information about the NFCSP, please go to www.gu.org for a fact sheet and user guide about the program or to the AoA website at www.aoa.gov. The five categories of the NFCSP are written to be flexible and respond to the needs of the caregivers in the area being served. The fifth category, supplemental services, is particularly broad. It is not defined in the law and will not be further defined by the AoA. The intent is for this category to be extremely flexible, although it can only be used on a limited basis, not as an ongoing source of funding for a specific program. This fact sheet provides information about the NFCSP's fifth category, supplemental services.

PROGRAM EXAMPLES

The following are types of assistance that are being provided under the category of supplemental services: legal services, transportation for support group meetings or for caregiver's errands, meals and clothing, housekeeping services, home

repairs and modifications, as well as supplies and athletic costs for children. Although many supplemental services may most logically be provided on the local level, statewide activities also should be considered. Several innovative state programs include:

CALIFORNIA

Grandparents Parenting Again is a multi-service program for grandparents raising grandchildren in Sonoma County. Using supplemental services funds, they collaborate with the Superior Court Probate Division to provide an innovative legal clinic. The clinic offers grandparents free guardianship training that teaches them how to complete and file guardianship paperwork themselves. Many grandparents find that after attending the clinic, they do not need to hire an attorney for uncontested guardianships. For more information, contact Anne Pierce at (707) 566-8676 or grnyanie@pacbell.net.

ILLINOIS

Northwestern Illinois AAA is committed to providing legal assistance to the families through its current legal service provider, Prairie State Legal Services. The AAA offers legal assistance to kinship caregivers who need help accessing school enrollment and public benefits and obtaining guardianships or adopting the related children they are raising. The AAA has also held several legal assistance workshops for grandparents and other relatives raising children led by an attorney and a behavioral health specialist. The lawyers offer one-on-one "legal check-ups" for caregivers at the end of each workshop and offer individual recommendations.

In addition, the Northwest Illinois AAA has set up an Emergency Fund to financially assist relative caregivers that cannot afford needed items for their families such as school supplies, clothing, diapers and beds. The fund may also be used to assist caregivers pursuing legal options such as guardianship. For more information, contact Eric Hoffman, Community Services Specialist, at (815) 226-4901 or (800) 542-8402 or niaaa@nwilaaa.org.



MICHIGAN

Senior Volunteers and the Region IV AAA in Southwest Michigan provide "Family Fun" events four to five times a year during which caregivers and children from all three AAA counties participate. The senior volunteers, "Family Friends", help staff these events. In the past year, there have been programs at local nature centers, a children's museum and the 7th Annual State-Wide Kinship Care Resource Center Picnic in Lansing with over 2,000 relative caregivers across Michigan attending. Family Fun events always include a meal, attendance incentives and mileage reimbursement. For more information, contact Camellia Pisegna, Director, Senior Volunteer Programs, at (616) 983-7058 or pisegna@state.mi.us.



sensation in some individual cases. The families will also have access to mediation services, legal seminars, and Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) services.

In addition, the Area Agency on Aging and Disability (AAAD) is arranging for staff to participate in non legal services and assist with special events including picnics, and holiday gatherings. For more information, contact Nancy Peace, AAA Director, at (931) 432-4111 or npeace@uccd.org.

OREGON

The Clackamas County Aging and Disability Services offers various types of assistance under the category of supplemental services to relative caregivers with unique requests. For example the costs for a grandchild's educational tutoring, a membership to a community swimming pool and a grandchild's horseback riding lessons have been purchased using supplemental services funds. For more information, contact Marianne Hard, Program Coordinator, at (503) 794-8065 or maryhar@co.clackamas.or.us.

SOUTH DAKOTA

The South Dakota Office of Adult Services and Aging partners with the Office of Child Protection to offer services for grandparents and other relatives raising children. The Office of Child Protection contracts with social workers in the South Dakota school system to identify older relative caregivers. They offer cash assistance to grandparent and other relative caregivers through supplemental services for items such as children's clothing and sports uniforms. For more information, contact Carla Leiferman, Program Specialist, at (605) 773-3656 or Carla.Leiferman@state.sd.us.

TENNESSEE

The Upper Cumberland Development District AAA in Tennessee is coordinating the provision of services through a variety of local agencies. For example, the attorney funded through Title III of the Older Americans Act is providing legal services to the families. The lawyer provides education on custody, adoption, public benefits, and other legal issues, and will provide repre-

CONCLUSION

As defined, supplemental services in the NFCSF are intentionally broad and non-specific. This enables members of the aging network to draw on local knowledge of needs and opportunities to make the best possible use of the funds. Taking advantage of the non-specific language of the guidelines enables aging network members considerable degrees of freedom in best meeting the needs of the older relative caregiver populations they serve.

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For further information, please contact: Generations United (GU), 1333 H Street, N.W., Suite 500W, Washington, D.C. 20005 (202) 289-3979, Fax: (202) 289-3952; e-mail: gu@gu.org. The GU web site at www.gu.org contains additional information about grandparents and other relatives raising children.

Generations United (GU) is the national membership organization focused solely on promoting intergenerational strategies, programs, and policies. GU represents more than 100 national, state, and local organizations representing more than 70 million Americans. It is the only national organization advocating for the mutual well-being of children, youth, and older adults. GU serves as a resource for educating policymakers and the public about the economic, social, and personal imperatives of intergenerational cooperation. GU provides a forum for those working with children, youth, and older adults to explore areas of common ground while celebrating the richness of each generation.



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1. U.S. Census 2000 SF1, table P28, Relationship by Household Type for population Under 18 Years.
2. U.S. Census 2000 DP-2, Grandparent Caregivers in the United States, the 50 States, and the District of Columbia.